

Submitted Questions:

1. Question: In paragraph C.7, the hours of operation was stated, however paragraph C. 11 referred to "Optional Enhancements", a 24 hour, seven days a week call center. How will the contactor be informed of this optional requirement and what timeframe will be provided to meet the terms of the requirement?

Answer: Please refer to section H.5 of the RFP

2. Question: Paragraph C.11 states a desire to have multi-lingual CSR reps; what are the preferred or required languages?

Answer: Unknown at this time.

3. Question: Paragraph C.9 states that CSR's must have knowledge of PTO information. To what degree does this knowledge have to be?

Answer: Per L.4.A.2, Offerors should demonstrate that their CSRs are knowledgeable in general patent and trademark information publicly available on the USPTO's website (www.uspto.gov) – though the USPTO will provide training on specific USPTO information after award.

4. Question: In addition, will there be a time made available for potential contractors to meet with the incumbent staff?

Answer: No. No time will be made available prior to award.

5. Question: C.11 – For what amounts are current CSRs bonded for? How many current CSRs are bonded? What percentage?

Answer: Current CSRs are not bonded.

6. Question: C.11c – Which languages?

Answer: Unknown at this time.

7. Question: Definitions – In these cases, is payment permanently withheld or temporarily withheld until issues are resolved?

Answer: With respect to the definition of number 12, "Negative Incentive", payment will be permanently withheld.

8. Question: E.3 – Please elaborate on “calibration” expectations.

Answer: The USPTO and Contractor will review performance and quality on supported interactions to ensure that expectations are understood and met.

9. Question: Are status reports expected daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly? F.5 does not make this clear.

Answer: Status reports are meant to be narrative accompaniments to statistical Performance reports and should be submitted accordingly.

10. Question: Please confirm that the optional enhancement of 24X7 expanded hours is not required during the base year.

Answer: None of the optional enhancements are required during the base **period**.

11. Question: May we have access to current project documentation in the next week? We want to be able to present the best approach possible and understanding current project operations would be helpful in doing so.

Answer: Unclear question. The RFP clearly states the UCC’s requirements.

12. Question: What are the existing staffing levels of the incumbent? We understand that there are 20 seats, but how many CSRs work at a given time?

Answer: Current staffing levels have been established to meet current performance requirements and vary accordingly. Offeror is required to propose a staffing plan to meet the performance levels as specified in the RFP.

13. Question: Is the ECC supported by government personnel or another contractor?

Answer: Both.

14. Question: Does the UCCMS produce the reports identified in C.8.1.3 or are these created separately? If so, what format are they currently provided in?

Answer: Data used in reports is available from both the ECC and UCCMS systems; format of the Performance reports are to be developed by Contractor.

15. Question: When is contract award anticipated?

Answer: **Estimated** contract award is June 30, 2005.

16. Question: Are all office supplies provided by the government? For example, paper, printers, fax machine, etc.?

Answer: Please refer to section H.14 of the RFP. The USPTO will provide paper and toner for the fax and network printer list in H.14. No other general office supplies will be furnished by the government.

QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO SECTION C.5 OF THE RFP (UCC WORK FLOW)

17. Question: Is there a document that details the workflow process for the call center?

Answer: No.

18. Question: How does UCC currently measure Call Center performance?

Answer: Please refer to Attachment D for the performance requirements associated with this RFP.

19. Question: What is the standard Service Level Agreement (SLA) being followed by UCC with the current contractor?

Answer: Please refer to Attachment D for the performance requirements associated with this RFP.

20. Question: What is the variance in the SLA?

Answer: Please refer to Attachment D for the performance requirements associated with this RFP.

QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO SECTION C.6 OF THE RFP (UCC WORK VOLUME)

21. Question: What is the current ACD metrics for Call Abandon Rate and the Average Speed to Answer by the existing contractor?

Answer: Please refer to Attachment D for the performance requirements associated with this RFP.

22. Question: What is the current First Contact Resolution (FCR)?

Answer: Please refer to Attachment D for the performance requirements associated with this RFP.

QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO SECTION C.8.1.1 OF THE RFP (Supervisor and CSR Training)

23. Question: What are the standard training requirements of UCC?

Answer: Please refer to Section C.8.1.1 for the UCC training requirements.

24. Question: Is there any standard training document that UCC has for CSRs?

Answer: CSRs should be knowledgeable in general patent and trademark information – which is publicly available on the USPTO’s website (www.uspto.gov).

25. Question: Will phone scripts need to be created?

Answer: Not a requirement in this RFP.

26. Question: “Illustrative” labor categories provided in paragraph C.9 do not include personnel necessary for performing work described in paragraphs C.8.2.1.2 and C.8.2.1.5. Will PTO provide labor categories and descriptions to support performing this work?

Answer: This work is intended to be performed by the “Customer Service Representative” illustrative labor category.

27. Question: PTO currently provides equipment GFE to support a backup call center. If a backup call center is required, will the equipment be provided GFE or will the contractor need to include this in their overall cost?

Answer: Not a requirement in this RFP.

28. Question: PTO currently provides equipment for the reproduction of materials for distribution through the UCC Mail operations. This equipment is not listed as GFE. Will the contractor need to provide the facilities and equipment needed to store, reproduce, package and mail PTO materials?

Answer: Not a requirement in this RFP.

29. Question: It is assumed the PTO will provide all connectivity support between the PTO and the Offerors off-site support facility. Is this correct?

Answer: Not correct. Please refer to Sections C.2 and H.14.

30. Question: Can a single individual, assuming they meet all of the qualifications, perform as both the Technical Writer and Customer Service Analyst?

Answer: The labor categories provided in Section C.9 are illustrative; Contactor can propose different labor categories based on their proposed staffing plan. Please refer to Section L.4, Evaluation Factor A, Subfactor 2 for additional instructions.

31. Question: PTO indicates that a resume needs to be provided for each labor category; however, labor category descriptions are meant to be illustrative. Specifically which resumes must be provided?

Answer: Please refer to Section L.4, Evaluation Factor A, Subfactor 2 for resume proposal requirements.

32. Question: Should cost of mailings be included in overall cost of CLINS 000XE?

Answer: No.

33. Question: Will PTO provide mail franking equipment?

Answer: Not a requirement in this RFP.

34. Question: Has the PTO order entry system been integrated into the UCCMS?

Answer: Not a requirement in this RFP.

35. Question: Section B.2, page 2 states that the type of contract is Firm Fixed Price, Performance Based. Section L.4 states that the Volume 2 Price Proposal shall contain the following items: (1) Price Proposal (Time and Material). Please clarify the contract type.

Answer: The type of contract is Firm Fixed Price, Performance Based. The reference to Time and Material under Section L.4.(1) will be deleted in the forthcoming Amendment 0001 to the RFP.

36. Question: Section B.3 calls for pricing subCLINS of CLINS 1 and 2. Will PTO accept offers based on an aggregate fixed price for CLIN 1 and 2 (i.e., without separate breakouts for subCLINS) respectively based on set workload volumes?

Answer: No.

37. Question: Section B does not make any provision for pricing out transition. Does that mean PTO will not pay the awardee for activities undertaken in the transition period?

Answer: Offerors are not required to separately price the transition period; the base period includes the 30-day transition period. Please refer to Sections C.4 and F.3 of the RFP. The forthcoming Amendment 0001 to the RFP will correct the reference under Section C.4 from L.4.A.6 to L.4.A.5.

38. Question: Section B, CLIN 0003A requires pricing for Supervisor and Customer Service Representative Training, but Section C.8.1.1 indicates that training is not reimbursable. Please clarify.

Answer: The “Supervisor and Customer Service Representative Training” CLINs are intended to be cost elements for the limited USPTO-provided training as identified in Section C.8.1.1. Currently, the UCC estimates that 40 hours per CSR per year is spent on USPTO-provided training.

39. Question: Section C.2 indicates that PTO will house Supervisors and CSRs on-site at the UCC with contractor managers and analysts located off-site at contractor facilities. However, the solicitation does not provide any direction or guidance on whether the PTO will provide space at the UCC for the required Technical Writer. Should Offerors assume that the Technical Writer will reside off-site at the contractor facilities?

Answer: Yes.

40. Question: Section C.2 on page 13 of the RFP reads, “The Contractor shall furnish the necessary personnel, equipment, supplies, and services to meet the requirements described in this Statement of Work (SOW).” Does this requirement include such supplies that are outside the scope of normal activities?

Answer: Please refer to the response to question 16.

41. Question: C.6.1a. states that the USPTO started a "Call Center Improvement" effort. Is it complete, and, if so, is a copy of the findings available for review?

Answer: Not relevant to the requirements of this RFP.

42. Question: Section C.8.2.1. What procedures must the contractor follow to obtain pre-approval for standard emails/postal communications, etc indicated on page 17? What procedures must the contractor follow to obtain approval for responses to email/postal inquiries that cannot be met by pre-approved responses?

Answer: Pre-approved responses are made available to Contractor staff in the USPTO’s UCCMS system. Strict use of pre-approved responses for email/postal communications is required, as specified in the RFP.

43. Question: Section C.8.2.1.3 “For all electronic mail.” Does this include requests for documents made via the USPTO website?

Answer: Not relevant to the requirements of this RFP.

44. Question: Section C.9.b. Please confirm that the Supervisor and Task Manager functions are one and the same?

Answer: Yes.

45. Question: Section C.9 requires that CSRs have knowledge of trademark and patent information. Please describe the level of “knowledge” required of the CSRs and other positions based on the position descriptions. Can the requirement be met with training of CSRs immediately following contract award?

Answer: Please refer to the response to question 3.

46. Question: Section C.11(c) Optional Enhancements requires the contractor to have the capability “To provide multi-lingual CSRs to provide telephone, email and other customer service support in a language other than English.” Please specify for which languages in what volumes PTO may future requirements. The cost of meeting these requirements will vary with the language. For example, “multi-lingual” CSRs to provide customer support to Spanish speaking customers will cost less than CSRs who can assist customers speaking Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Arabic or Farsi.

Answer: Please refer to the response to question 2.

47. Question: Section E.3, page 27. Please define “calibration session.”

Answer: Please refer to the response to question 8.

48. Question: Section F.3 defines the “Base Period” as the interval between the “Effective date of the contract through September 30, 2005.” Will PTO designate an “effective date” for pricing purposes? If not, please provide guidance on how Offerors can prepare a fixed price offer for an indefinite period of performance?

Answer: The effective date of the contract will be the same day as the award date. Please refer to the response to question 15.

49. Question: Section F.5, page 30. The list of deliverables identifies a Quality Assurance Plan, which is to be delivered 30 days after contract award. The RFP also requires a Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP) to be delivered with the proposal. Please describe the difference between the two plans.

Answer: The reference to the Quality Assurance Plan as a 30-day deliverable under Section F.5 will be deleted in the forthcoming Amendment 0001 to the RFP.

50. Question: Is the QASP included in the 30 page limit?

Answer: Yes.

51. Question: Section L.5 states that the type for all proposal documents (including charts and graphs) shall be black. Please clarify whether the use of the word “type” refers only to the text (i.e. words), or also to graphic shapes, shading, etc.

Answer: The use of the word “type” refers to the text (i.e. words) and also to graphic shapes, shading, etc.

52. Question: Section L, page 64, #4 reads, “The Quality Assurance Plan must address, but is not limited to, the following items;” however, no items are listed. Please clarify.

Answer: “The Quality Assurance Plan must address, but is not limited to the items mentioned in the next paragraph beginning with “Performance Measures....” and ending with “.....Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan”. Forthcoming Amendment 0001 to the RFP will delete the space between the two paragraphs to make it clearer.

53. Question: Under Attachment D – Performance Matrix page 2 – Please provide the Courtesy and Professionalism Guidelines.

Answer: Please refer to Sections C.8.2.4.1 and C.8.2.4.2.

54. Question: Are resumes included in the 30 page maximum?

Answer: No.

55. Question: How many additional call centers and business areas are there used for reference purposes?

Answer: For reference, there are approximately 20 additional call centers or business areas to where calls are transferred.

56. Question: Does the ACD being used by PTO allow for silent remote monitoring?

Answer: Yes.

57. Question: What type of reports can be generated from the UCCMS?

Answer: Various call center and agent reports.

58. Question: Please provide sample reports generated from the UCCMS before proposal submission?

Answer: If it is possible for the USPTO to provide sample reports generated from the UCCMS, these reports will be posted on the USPTO Business Opportunities Website along with these RFP questions and answers.

59. Question: Can the UCCMS be accessed remotely –via the web?

Answer: No.

60. Question: Do existing procedures allow for calls to always be transferred to a live person (warm transfer) or can they be transferred to a voicemail system?

Answer: In general, calls that require transfers are cold transferred to a call center queue. However, existing procedures do allow CSRs to utilize consultative (warm) transfers as appropriate.

61. Question: How many publications are available to the public for ordering? Are there order limits on the publications? How are orders processed? Is there a web-based real time order entry system?

Answer: Please refer to the following web page to view a list of most-commonly requested publications:
<http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/ac/ido/oeip/catalog/prices/gisorder.htm>. Requests for these publications are provided to the UCC via phone, email, voicemail or postal mail and are entered into the UCCMS system.

62. Question: How are postal requests from customers received, i.e. is there a mailbox that must be checked or is the mail hand-delivered?

Answer: Mail will be delivered and assigned to contractors by government staff.

63. Question: Would USPTO provide format for the Pricing Schedule in addition to the template provided in Section B.3? Because the table in Section B.3 does not cover all the elements that USPTO desires in the proposal requirements Section L.4.B of the Pricing Volume.

Answer: The USPTO will not provide a format for the Pricing Schedule. Offerors are expected to provide the information required in Section L.4.B Price Proposal in an organized, clear and concise manner.

64. Question: What are underlying technologies of the USPTO's Customer Contact Management System (UCCMS)? What reporting tools are currently being used on this project?

Answer: The UCCMS system is built using tools from Siebel Software, Inc. The ECC system is built using tools from Interactive Intelligence, Inc. Various reporting tools such as Actuate and Crystal Reports are used to extract data from these systems.

65. Question: Does USPTO plan on using Contractor's proposed QASP to measure Contractor Service quality, consistency, and customer satisfaction goals? If not, how would this be measured?

Answer: The USPTO plan's on using the Contractor's proposed QASP to measure Contractor Service quality, consistency, and customer satisfaction goals in conjunction with USPTO's internal Quality Assurance Surveillance procedures.

66. Question: Does USPTO currently have same types of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) in place for this work? If so, what has been performance history on these for last 2 years?

Answer: Not relevant to the requirements of this RFP. Please refer to Attachment D for performance requirements for this RFP.

67. Question: Can USPTO please provide us the current incumbent's staffing arrangement – meaning how many and what types of staff are currently working on this USPTO UCC work?

Answer: Please refer to the response to question 12.

68. Question: Can USPTO provide us with break down of telephone calls received by day and by hour?

Answer: Please refer to Questions and Answers Attachment "1" Detail Call Volumes for half-hour breakdowns from 10/1/2005 to 4/30/2005 that will be posted on the USPTO Business Opportunities Website along with these RFP Questions and Answers.

69. Question: Can USPTO provide us with break down of email and fax volume by day and by hour?

Answer: No.

70. Question: Can USPTO please provide clarification on how walk-ins are serviced and an Average Handle Time (AHT) for these over last 3 to 6 months?

Answer: Please refer to Section C.8.2.3.6 for how walk-ins are serviced. Per Attachment C, there is no current data on AHT for walk-ins.

71. Question: There is potential growth issue by mid-year 2005 according to the statistics provided. According to this trend, the amount of contacts will outweigh the ability of the call volume each CSR can handle. What are USPTO's current plan to grow the CSR numbers to be able to handle the increased contact volume?

Answer: Please refer to Section C.2 of the RFP; Offerors are to propose a staffing plan for the UCC.

72. Question: Who controls the "canned responses" that CSRs use to respond to the customers? What are the procedures to have a response approved and/or written?

Answer: UCC's government staff develops, approves and releases canned responses. Please also refer to the response to question 42.

73. Question: What is the success rate of the IVR system for first time resolution to a customer potential inquiry?

Answer: Not relevant to the requirements of this RFP.

74. Question: What are the capabilities of the current configurations to provide reporting?

Answer: Please refer to the responses to questions 14 and 64.

75. Question: Would USPTO advise on what Statement of Work (SOW) changes have occurred through the life of the call center incumbent contract and how this affected the volume of contacts handled by the CSRs?

Answer: Not relevant to the requirements of this RFP.

76. Question: How are customers to be surveyed to determine quality of responses given by the CSRs? Who administers and how will this affect the overall contract?

Answer: Not relevant to the requirements of this RFP.

77. Question: As stipulated in the RFP, Contractor is to provide the workstations, who is to provide the servers?

Answer: The USPTO's baseline software connects the Contractor-provided workstations to the USPTO's network and allows the contractor-provided workstations access to required PTO servers.

78. Question: Who in USPTO will provide network infrastructure for the Contractor staff? What does that network infrastructure consist of?

Answer: Not relevant to the requirements of this RFP. Please refer to Attachment G for the minimum hardware configuration.

79. Question: Would USPTO be responsible for providing technical support for the contractor-furnished workstations and then USPTO-furnished equipment, USPTO-furnished ticket tracking database, software, and/or phone switch?

Answer: Please refer to #2 in Attachment G of the RFP.

80. Question: What service-levels are in place at the USPTO for the vendors providing technical equipment, hardware, software support to the UCC team?

Answer: Please refer to #2 in Attachment G of the RFP.

81. Question: What are the sites/countries outside of the continental United States that currently contact the call center after normal hours?

Answer: Unknown at this time.

82. Question: What is the distribution of those after-hour calls by hour and day of the week?

Answer: Unknown at this time.

83. Question: If the 24x7 option is exercised, will languages other than Spanish be a requirement? If yes, what are they and will the contract support incentive/proficiency pay for each language?

Answer: Please refer to the response to question 2. In terms of incentive/proficiency pay, under a Firm Fixed Price Contract it is up to the Offerors whether or not to include those kinds of things in its proposed pricing.

IN REFERENCE TO THE PROPOSED METRICS, THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE SUBMITTED:

THE USPTO ASSUMES THAT QUESTIONS 84 AND 85 PERTAIN TO THE METRICS FOUND ON ATTACHMENT D – PERFORMANCE MATRIX.

84. Question: Are the proposed metrics the same as existing metrics? If no, how are they different and why?

Answer: Not relevant to the requirements of this RFP.

85. Question: Under the existing contract, have the metrics ever been adjusted or suspended? If yes, when and why?

Answer: Not relevant to the requirements of this RFP. Please refer to Attachment D to the RFP for additional information.

86. Question: Please provide historical call volumes by ½ or 1 hour splits.

Answer: Please refer to Questions and Answers Attachment “1” Detail Call Volumes for half-hour breakdowns from 10/1/2005 to 4/30/2005.

87. Question: What is the value of the current contract by year?

Answer: Offerors must request this type of information by submitting a Freedom of Information Act request to the USPTO FOIA Office.

88. Question: Will you be providing a site visit timeframe?

Answer: No.

89. Question: Is there a document that details the workflow process for the call center?

Answer: No.

90. Question: What is the current average handle times for each activity?

Answer: Please refer to Attachment C of the RFP.

91. Question: What is the FTE for the current contract?

Answer: Please refer to the response to question 12.

92. Question: Is there a chart showing current call arrival patterns?

Answer: No.

93. Question: What are the average monthly call volumes?

Answer: Please refer to Attachment C.

94. Question: What is the expected abandonment rate?

Answer: Not relevant to the requirements of this RFP.

95. Question: Will there be training manuals and materials provided along with SOPs for the new contract employees?

Answer: As required.

96. Question: What is the timeframe for new employee training?

Answer: Please refer to Section C.4 of the RFP.

97. Question: When will the transition begin?

Answer: On the effective date of the contract. Please refer to the response to question 48.

98. Question: What languages are to be handled in the optional enhancements

Answer: Please refer to the response to question 2.

99. Question: Will the government consider an offsite call center option?

Answer: No.

100. Question: What is the percentage of labor that can be performed by subcontractors? Does this include management ?

Answer: Please refer to Section I.2 – FAR clause 52.219-14.

101. Question: Will the closing date of the RFP be extended?

Answer: Forthcoming Amendment 0001 to the RFP will extend the RFP closing date to Friday June 3, 2005 at 2:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.